

areas and ways that you and I might not agree with. In fact, you have taxpayers from one State who are subsidizing services for taxpayers in another State. For instance, in my State of New Jersey, I know that for every dollar that we send to Washington, we only receive back 54 cents from the Federal Government. That does not make sense to me and I know that is not fair.

Our recent leaders have tried to right this position of our Federal Government back to where our Founding Fathers had it. In his first inaugural address in 1981, President Reagan said, "It is my intention to curb the size and influence of the Federal establishment and to demand recognition of the distinction between the powers granted to the Federal Government and those reserved to the States or to the people. All of us need to be reminded that the Federal Government did not create the States; the States created the Federal Government."

In light of the looming fiscal crisis of our Federal budget and the domestic programs that are simply not reaching their intended goals, I believe it is imperative to highlight the need to return to a system intended under the reserve clause of the Constitution. I invite and encourage my colleagues to join the caucus and help us return control to those who know what is best, to the people. All of our constituents deserve the most efficient and effective government, a government in accord with our Constitution.

PRISONER ABUSE INVESTIGATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. McHENRY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, the call for an independent commission to review accusations of abuse of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and other places continues to grow. This is not a partisan issue. Members from both sides of the aisle, citizens who consider themselves progressives and citizens who consider themselves conservatives, have joined the call for such a commission. Opinion polls reflect the American people's deep concern about prisoner abuse. The security of our Nation is profoundly impacted by our reputation, by how we are viewed by the rest of the world.

Our response to terrorism is based on contrasting our values to theirs. We are conducting an ideological war in parallel with police and military operations. The outcome of both the ideological struggle and the armed struggle hinge to a significant extent on this great test of values.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, it is great shame that attention has been diverted in recent days from the fundamental issues to the words used by one Senator, a Senator whom I much admire and greatly respect, who has admitted

that the words he used were too strong and who has apologized to those whom he may have offended. The issue raised by the Senator was timely, on target, and central to our Nation's best interests, despite the fact that his specific words failed to properly frame his message.

It is imperative that we remain focused on the issue that the Senator called to our attention and not allow ourselves to be dissuaded, deterred, or discouraged from pursuing a thorough public inquiry into prisoner abuse in much the same manner as the commission we created to examine September 11.

Do some of the policies of our government endanger our troops by disparaging the image of America? Are our own troops endangered by our strained and unique interpretation of the Geneva Conventions? Has our approach to human intelligence distorted and limited our ability to understand and respond to the insurgency in Iraq and the terrorist threat in general? Do the incidents of abuse flow from decisions taken at the highest levels with regard to the conduct of American intelligence?

These are urgent and critical questions that cannot be answered adequately in the inquiries launched to date. We owe a great debt to those who have spoken out, calling for an independent commission, sometimes at great personal cost. I thank them for their leadership.

We owe a great debt to Senator RICHARD DURBIN for helping cause Americans to look seriously at this issue of prisoner abuse by our intelligence agencies and our military. I thank the Senator.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. OSBORNE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to use the time of the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

SOMATIC CELL NUCLEAR TRANSFER IS HUMAN CLONING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the bioethical issues that we have been debating for the past several years, and particularly over the last

couple of months, deal with fundamental questions about the value of human life and the meaning of human dignity. Every poll conducted on the subject of human embryo cloning for research indicates that 70 to 80 percent of the American people oppose human embryo cloning for research purposes. Cloning advocates know that the American public is adamantly opposed to their goals, so they have crafted new speech in an attempt to deliberately mislead Members of Congress, the media, grassroots advocates and the American public.

One of the leading patient advocacy groups for human cloning research is the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, and they have been sanitizing the language and playing semantic games with a willing media and an unaware American public.

Let me give you a few examples. Last year when representatives of the JDRF stopped by my office, they shared with my staff that they endorsed stem cell research involving somatic cell nuclear transfer. When my staff replied that somatic cell nuclear transfer, or SCNT, was the cloning of human embryos, the JDRF advocates in my office responded that they had been told by those training them for their Hill visit that SCNT did not create a human embryo because sperm was not used. Indeed, the literature in their own hands stated the following: "When scientists use SCNT to create stem cells, no sperm is used and the resulting cell has no chance of developing into a human being because it is never placed in a uterus. This is a fundamentally different procedure from reproductive cloning, as was used by scientists in 1996 to create Dolly the sheep."

This statement is misleading on several counts. JDRF is flat-out wrong when they state that SCNT is a "fundamentally different procedure from reproductive cloning, as was used by scientists in 1996 to create Dolly the sheep." Dr. Ian Wilmut, Dolly's own creator, does not agree with the JDRF statement. Dr. Wilmut stated clearly in a peer-reviewed article, "the unique feature of Dolly was that she was the first mammal to be cloned from an adult somatic body cell." Then he goes on to say, "The success of somatic cell nuclear transfer was used in creating Dolly."

Cloning supporter and then-NIH Director Harold Varmus testified in 1998 stating, "in the Dolly experiment, a lamb was produced using the technology of somatic cell nuclear transfer."

JDRF implies that sperm is necessary to develop an embryo capable of growing into a human. This notion is completely inaccurate, as hundreds of animals have been created through SCNT using no sperm. Was Dolly not a sheep because sperm was not involved? JDRF characterizes the resulting product of SCNT as merely a cell with no chance of developing into a "human." But President Clinton's own Bioethics

Advisory Commission disagrees with this statement. In 1997 his commission stated, "the commission began its discussions fully recognizing that any effort in humans to transfer a somatic cell nucleus into an enucleated egg involves the creation of an embryo, with the apparent potential to be implanted in utero and developed to term."

Many of the JDRF advocates that have visited Members of Congress are not to be faulted for this misinformation. They are simply sharing with you what those running JDRF's Hill advocacy program have told them. In fact, the patients and families selected to participate in the 2005 JDRF Children's Congress in Washington were required to assign a loyalty oath agreeing to support the JDRF position on these issues. The loyalty oath found on that application, which I have blown up, and I have next to me right here states, "If there is a discussion of such controversial topics as embryonic stem cell research, I will either embrace the JDRF legislative position on such topics or will not work against the JDRF position."

This statement clearly calls for applicants to be willing to embrace ethically questionable research or be willing to muzzle their personal and moral convictions. Let us have an honest debate on embryonic stem cell research and let us have an honest debate on human cloning and what it is. It is somatic cell nuclear transfer.

CONGRESS OUT OF TOUCH WITH AMERICAN PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, to see just how out of touch the Republican Congress is with the American people, look no further than the recent CBS poll taken just last week. In the poll, it clearly says that 81 percent of the American public believes that Congress does not share their priorities. This, Mr. Speaker, is just how out of touch the Republican leadership is with the American people. They just do not get it. And today's debate is just one more example of that. Cutting public broadcasting. I cannot tell you how many dozens and dozens of my constituents have been calling me on this issue telling me and my staff emphatically that they absolutely do not want to see any cuts in public radio and TV broadcasting. But their wishes, their calls, their complaints, their desires, their priorities are falling on deaf ears.

In reality, the Labor-HHS bill that was on the floor today and will be back tomorrow shows once again how the Republican Party's outright irresponsible tax cuts for the rich have exhausted the budget. So when they say we have to cut money for things like job training, assistance for the unemployed, No Child Left Behind, commu-

nity services block grants, training programs for health professionals, the health communities access program, a program which helps serve the uninsured; as well as children's health block grants and freezing after-school centers, I say to them, on behalf of the American people, four out of five of whom do not support the Republican leadership, shame, shame, shame.

We are also spending \$1 billion a week in Iraq. That is \$4 billion a month. Yet this administration has zeroed out funding for Amtrak.

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Just 1 week of investment in Iraq would significantly improve passenger rail for the entire country for an entire year. I just want someone to explain to the American public why investing in transportation in Iraq is so much more important than investing in passenger rail right here in the United States of America.

Today right here in America we have 50 million people without health insurance. We have the highest trade deficit in the history of this country, and we have a \$477 billion Federal deficit. We have a \$375 billion shortfall in transportation funding, and we still do not know what happened to the weapons of mass destruction.

I close by posing this question: Is bankrupting this great country the top priority of this administration? I must repeat that. Is bankrupting this great country the top priority of this administration? They are certainly big on bankrupting Amtrak and doing away with passenger trains. I stand here to question the priorities of the House leadership, the priorities of the other body, and definitely to question those of the policymakers or the bean counters over in the White House.

Like 81 percent of the American public, I am growing tired and weary of the Republican majority and the priorities of this administration. I call on my colleagues to change directions, to give up privatizing Social Security, to give up selling out our health care system to the pharmaceuticals, and to listen to the American public and get in tune with their real needs.

URGING SUPPORT FOR H.R. 2892, REVERSE MORTGAGES TO HELP AMERICA'S SENIORS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCHENRY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, as we continue to discuss the best ways to strengthen retirement security for our Nation's seniors, I have looked into numerous programs to lessen the burden that our seniors face in rising health care costs, transportation, and homeownership.

As a long-time Bucks County Commissioner and now as a Member of Congress, I have received many phone

calls, many letters from seniors looking to find ways to stay in their homes and pay their bills. How many seniors do the Members know who are struggling financially because they do not have a steady income stream coming in, but are sitting on a valuable asset that is not working for them, an asset that they cannot cash in: the home that they want to stay in for their retirement?

Last week, Mr. Speaker, I introduced H.R. 2892. This legislation is bipartisan and is endorsed by AARP. It will eliminate the volume cap on the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Home Equity Conversion Mortgage, commonly referred to as the FHA-insured reverse mortgage program. A reverse mortgage is a unique loan that enables senior homeowners to remain in their homes and be financially independent by converting part of the equity in their homes into tax-free income without having to sell the home, does not require them to give up title, or to take on new mortgage payments. The funds from a reverse mortgage can be used for needs that every senior faces like health care costs, prescription drug costs, in-home care, prevention of foreclosure, paying off existing debts, home repairs, modification, or simple daily living expenses.

Reverse mortgages are aptly named because the payment stream is reversed. Instead of making monthly payments to the lender, as with a regular mortgage, the lender makes payments to the senior homeowner. This unique loan enables senior homeowners who are house rich but cash poor to convert part of their equity in their homes into tax-free income and allow the homeowner great flexibility in choosing how to receive the money. They can opt to receive a lump sum, fixed monthly payments, a line of credit, or a combination of the three. No monthly payments are required during the term of the loan, and it is paid back only when the resident sells the home, passes away, or has permanently moved out of the home.

A key part of the reverse mortgage program is mandatory counseling. To make sure that no one rushes into a mortgage that they are unprepared for, the program requires mandatory counseling prior to applying for a reverse mortgage to ensure that the homeowner has a plan to use the payments in a responsible and beneficial manner. The reverse mortgage program has been successful and popular with senior homeowners, so much so that the rapid growth in these mortgages created a near crisis this April when concerns arose that the cap was going to be reached, leading to a suspension of the program.

While the cap was raised from \$150,000 to \$250,000 in the 2005 emergency supplemental appropriation bill, this is just a temporary solution. AARP stated that the only complete removal of the volume cap, which is